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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY # /

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report on Soviet foreign broadcast listening

contains information on the quality of reception, the foreign stations heard, the radio frequencies used, and the Soviet attitudes toward certain broadcasts.

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SECRETRADIO LISTENING IN THE USSR

1. In 1954 [] a [] Soviet who formerly served in the Soviet Navy, bought a four-tube long and medium-wave band Moskvich radio in Sevastopol (N 44-35, E 33-34), Ukrainian SSR. Only third and fourth-rate radios were on sale. He planned to buy a better radio in either Riga or Moscow when he went on leave but he was unsuccessful. In autumn 1955, he asked for a Riga-10 in a store in Moscow and was told that there were none available. A gentleman in the store asked in a loud voice what type of radio [] was interested in buying. The gentleman explained to him that the price of the Riga-10 was 1,180 rubles, but that he could have one for 1,500. [] decided against buying, scared off by another customer who warned [] that some people had been cheated by having their money stolen. A friend [] however, bought a 1,500 ruble Belorus for 1,700 rubles from a speculator.

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2. [] used [] radio largely for listening to music. [] preferred classical music, but [] also enjoyed traditional folk music. [] preference was an exception to the average Soviet naval officer. Of non-musical programs, [] preferred the Leningrad stations. Specifically, [] the program featuring the satirist, Arkady Baikin, from the Leningrad Theater, which was broadcast twice a week. [] also [] the program "Discussion of the Forgotten", in which two people conversed about pre-Revolutionary poets and writers, such as Esenin, Fed, and Tchuchev.

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3. [] first heard foreign radio broadcasts in 1948 and 1949 on a Riga-6 at the home of a friend in Yaroslavl, Yaroslavskaya Oblast. The friend listened each day to VOA and BBC broadcasts, because he felt that he was not being given the whole truth and wished to get objective news. [] When [] in Leningrad from 1949 to 1953, [] used to visit a former schoolmate from Yaroslavl once a week. They usually listened to BBC, which they both preferred, on a Leningrad radio. The reception was quite clear, but [] could not recall on which frequencies they listened. [] was last in Leningrad in March 1956 and again heard the BBC [].

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4. In Sevastopol, the period from 0800 to 2400 hours was the period of poorest reception. Reception improved after midnight. [] never tried to listen to foreign broadcasts while on any of his cruises in the Baltic or Black Sea.

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5. In Sevastopol, [] small Moskvich radio was too weak to pick up very much through the heavy jamming from a jamming transmitter, which [] was located at Balaklava (N 44-30, E 33-35), Ukrainian SSR. The jamming consisted of a staccato drone or a low rumble. [] occasionally heard VOA but never BBC. A friend [] in Sevastopol, who had a much stronger Ural set, was also unable to pick up BBC. [] it was possible to pick up VOA without particular difficulty on wave length 1731, but beginning in 1955, Radio Moscow began broadcasting on approximately the same frequency, Radio Moscow programs usually consisted of march music. As a result, [] was able to hear only the first ten or fifteen minutes of the program, which consisted of a news summary. By twirling the dial to about 1040, Radio Moscow faded but interference from a Turkish station

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occurred. Reception was generally better in Leningrad than in Sevastopol.

6. [redacted] 25X1
civilians were more politically conscious than naval personnel. From two incidents in Sevastopol, however, [redacted] assumed that listening was also fairly widespread among Soviet naval officers. Sometime in 1955, the Deputy Political Officer of a naval detachment complained at a meeting that there were officers who listened to Western propaganda. In January 1957 at a Party meeting where a secret letter from the Central Committee was read discussing manifestations of ideological weakness among students and urging increased ideological vigilance, the Party Secretary concluded the meeting by telling how two naval lieutenants were expelled in December 1956 from their Komsomol unit and lowered in rank for spreading information picked up from VOA. [redacted] these officers were later discharged. 25X1
7. [redacted] could not say whether there was a greater tendency to listen to foreign broadcasts when international conditions became strained. [redacted] used to listen at [redacted] to news about the Korean War. The expulsion of the naval officers may have occurred as a result of spreading information concerning events in Hungary or Egypt, since the two events were closely related in time. 25X1 25X1
8. [redacted] preferred BBC over VOA [redacted] 25X1
[redacted] sometime in 1955, VOA programs which concerned the Soviet Armed Forces and also the seizure of Mongolia. Also, some religious programs carried by VOA displeased [redacted] they would appeal only to elderly types. [redacted] VOA programs [redacted] consisted too often of too much propaganda. 25X1 25X1
9. [redacted] preferred to hear broadcasts discussing popular science, historical programs about the USSR, China, and other countries, programs which discussed foreign authors, American music, and German poetry. [redacted] using more citations from writers who had once been in favor in the USSR, but who were now denounced as reactionary. Examples of such writers were Sinclair, Hemingway, Priestly, Aldridge, Howard Fast, and Sartre. Also, a greater effort should be made to persuade middle-class Soviets of the superior standard of living enjoyed by the average American. However, [redacted] the West was vulnerable on topics such as the comparison of medical expenses with those in the Soviet Union, unemployment, and racial discrimination. 25X1 25X1
10. [redacted] television sets were aboard many Soviet merchant vessels traveling in Soviet and foreign waters. He had never seen any Western propaganda leaflets. 25X1

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